

CANINE AGGRESSION TOWARDS FAMILY CHILDREN

FINAL DEGREE PROJECT - JUNE 2023

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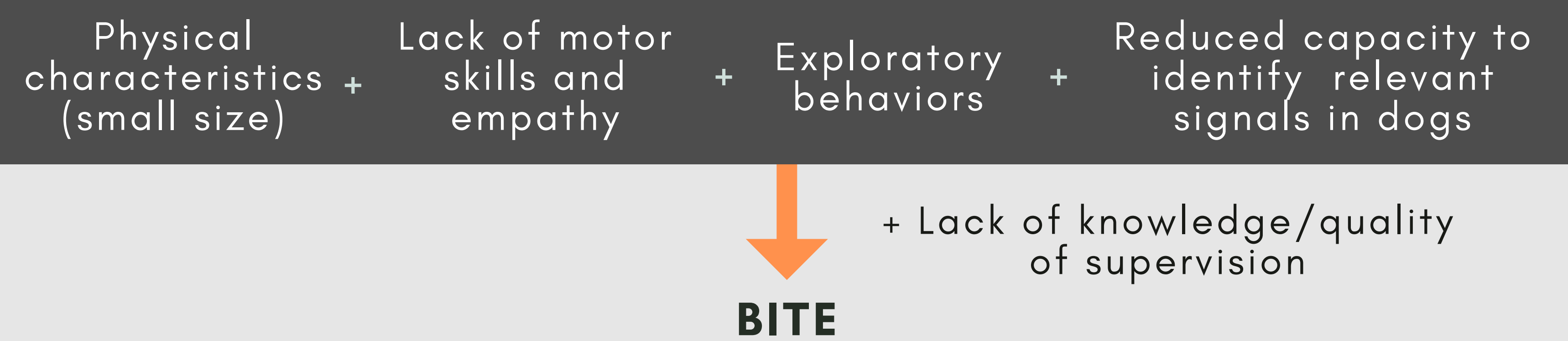
OBJECTIVES

1. Explore the **concept** and **implications** of canine aggression towards family children.
2. **Characterize** the **behavioral patterns** and circumstances surrounding those bites.
3. Develop information materials to provide parents with **prevention tools** and strategies.



CHILDREN, MOST AT-RISK POPULATION

1% of emergency visits to school-age children are due to dog bites and between **56% and 75% of dog attacks are directed towards children.**



CIRCUMSTANCES

- **75% occur in the home environment** involving children bitten by a dog owned by a family member.
- Up to **86%** are triggered by **child-initiated interactions**.
- Most commonly reported as **positive interactions** (e.g. hugging).

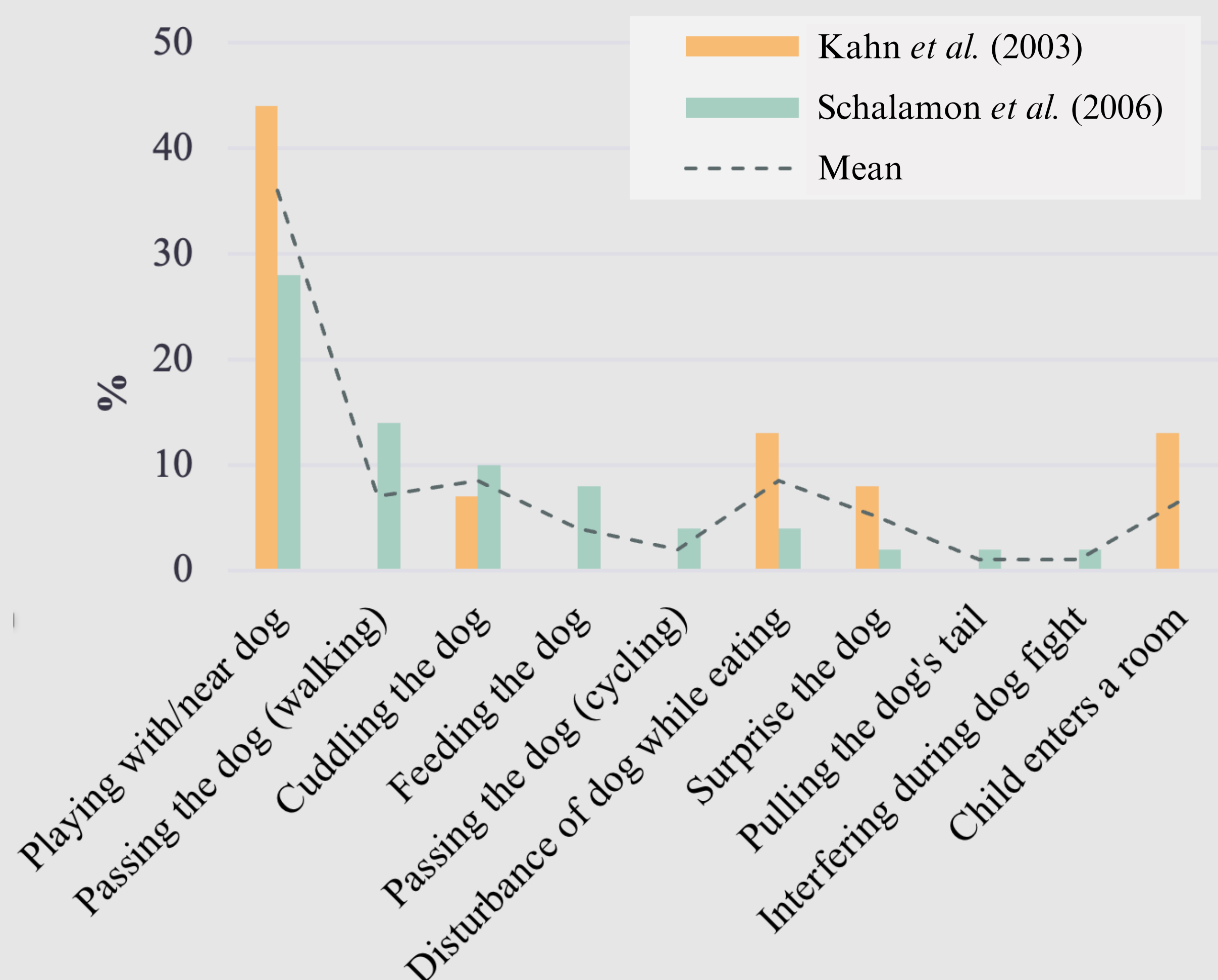


Figure 1. External circumstances of bites.

Source: own development; Data: Kahn et al. (2003) and Schalamon et al. (2006).

CONSEQUENCES

CHILD

1. **Physical** damage: scar
2. **Emotional** distress: fear, PTSD, nightmares

DOG

1. Decrease in **quality of life**
2. Higher risk of **euthanasia** or **relinquishment**

IMPACT ON HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND

PARENTS

1. **Psychological** damage: fear, concern, blame

PREVENTION

Through:

- Environmental modification
- Quality supervision
- Education
- Dog socialization

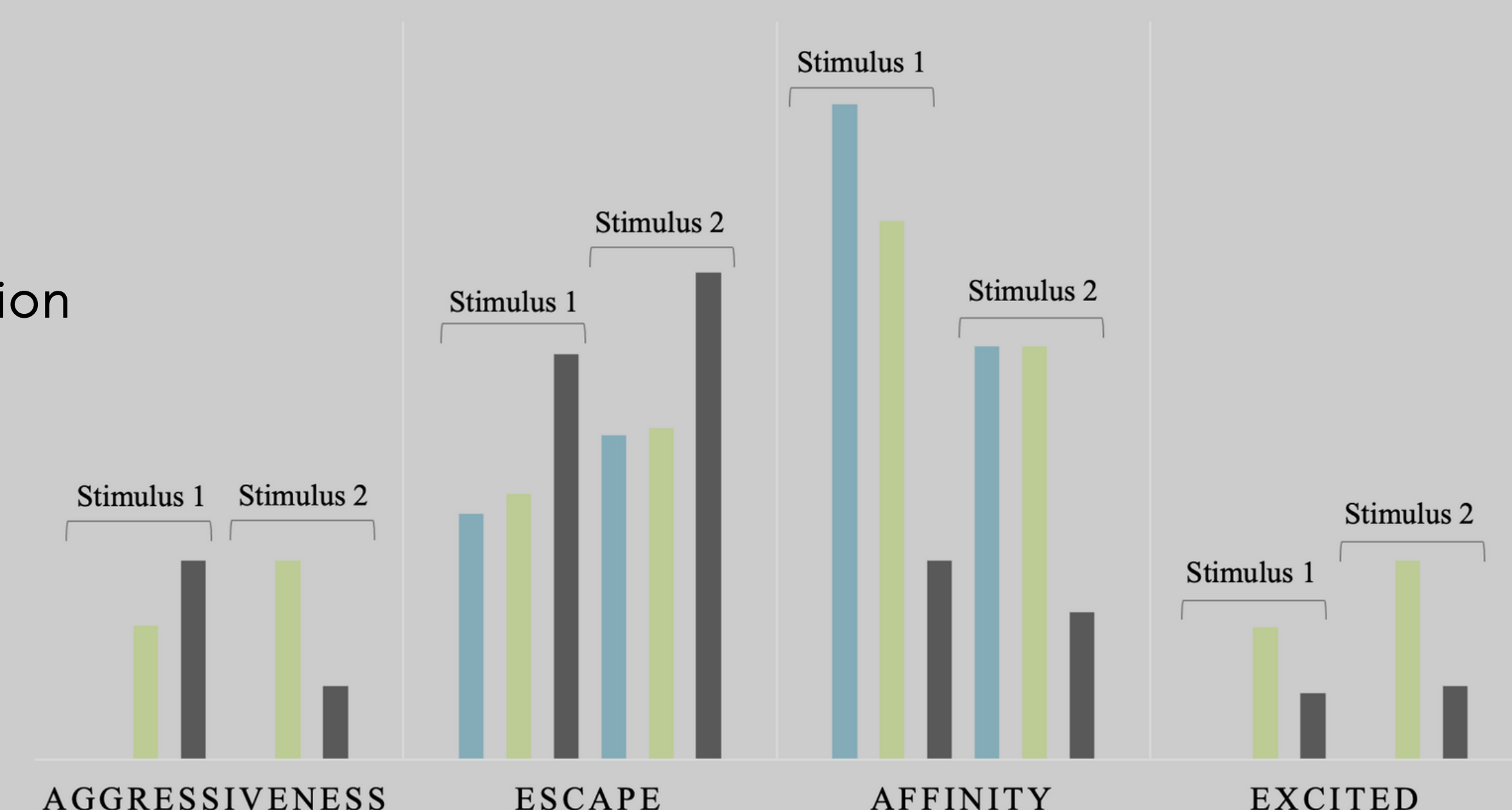


Figure 2. Dogs' behavioral responses to child stimuli.

Source: own development; Data: Arai et al. (2011).

Stimulus 1: child called dog's name while standing static.
Stimulus 2: child ran around the dog while calling the dog's name.

Group 1: In contact with children during the canine socialization period
Group 2: In contact with children after this socialization period
Group 3: Seldom had contact with children

DISCUSSION

1. Challenging misinformation.
2. Extend education beyond prevention.
3. Insufficiently studied impact on human-animal bond.
4. Resolution must rely on veterinarians with specific training on animal behaviour.
5. Purpose: preserve the **safety** of the victims and ensure canine **well-being**.

CONCLUSIONS

Canine aggression is a **complex** and **multivariate phenomenon**.

WHAT YOU SEE:

TENDERNESS
LOVE
AFFECTION

WHAT HE FEELS:

DISCOMFORT
NEED FOR SPACE
TENSION



UNDERSTANDING



PREVENTING



PROTECTING

... are vital to enable **SAFE** child-dog interactions

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